
Navigating the NIH:

Getting the Most from Your NIH Postbac



NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Skills for Success

■ Science Skills

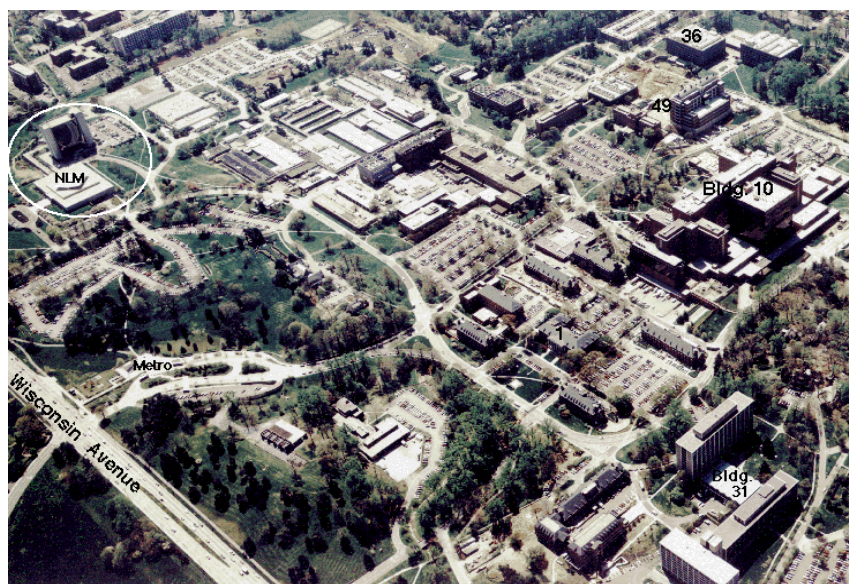
- ☐ Technical competence
- ☐ Critical thinking
- ☐ Problem solving
- ☐ Collaboration
- ☐ Project management

■ Professional Skills

- ☐ Speaking
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Teaching & mentoring
- ☐ Career planning
- ☐ Stress management
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Money management
- ☐ Self-management
- ☐ People management
- ☐ Leadership



What is the NIH?



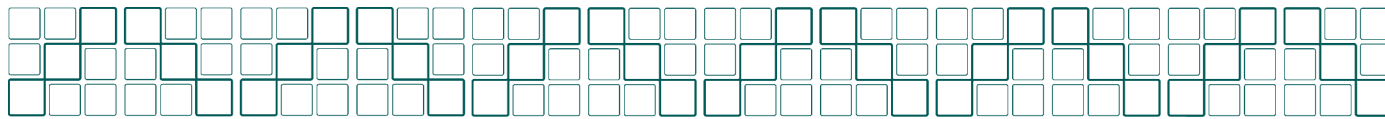
*The Nation's Biomedical
Research Institution*

- The goal of the NIH is to acquire new knowledge to help prevent, detect, diagnose, & treat disease & disability
- Composed of 27 Institutes and Centers (ICs), each with its own directed mission
- \$28 billion budget in FY2008
- Two main divisions:
intramural and **extramural**

The Intramural Research Program (IRP)

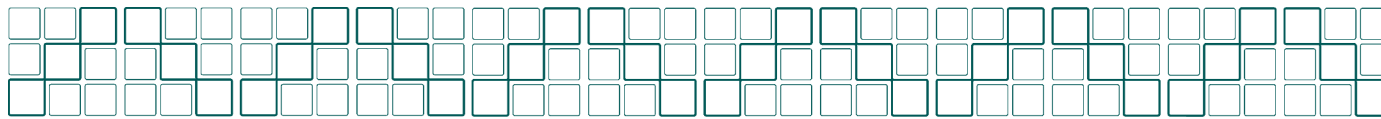
- 1100 faculty
- 4200 postdocs
- 485 graduate students
- 100 medical students
- 700 postbacs
- 1000 summer interns

+ staff scientists, staff clinicians and technicians



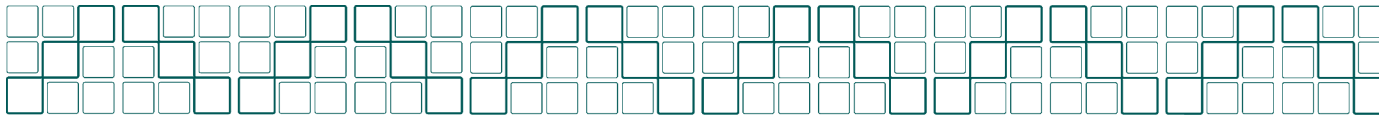
Knowing Your IC

- Training Director/Training Office
- SD and Deputy SDs
- Branch/Lab Chief
- PIs, Staff and fellows around you
- AO [and travel planner]



There is No Typical Postbac Experience

- Differences in lab and research groups
 - Group dynamics and atmosphere
 - Level of day-to-day engagement of the PI
 - Level of independence, at experimental level and beyond
 - Types of rules and how/whether they are imposed
 - Type and frequency of feedback



Supervisors and Mentors

■ Supervisor

- someone who directs the work of another
- a supervisor is responsible for ensuring that someone does their job

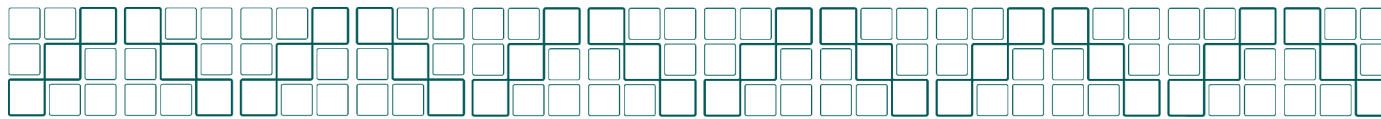
■ Mentor

- someone who passes on skills, knowledge, and wisdom to another person
- a mentor works to help develop someone's career

Supervision vs. mentoring

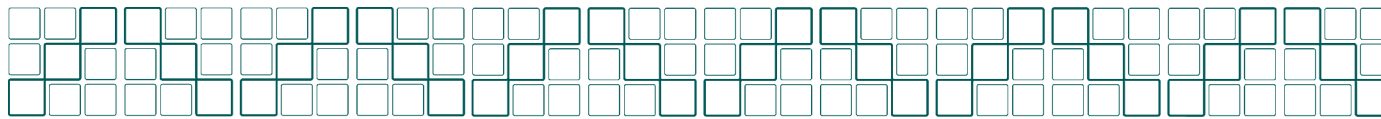
	Supervising	Mentoring
Focus of learning	Needs of the organization/group	Needs of the mentee
Style of help	Directive <i>"I tell - you do"</i>	Collaborative <i>"We talk - you do"</i>
Balance of power	In the control of the supervisor	More equal and fluid

Masterful Mentoring, 2005



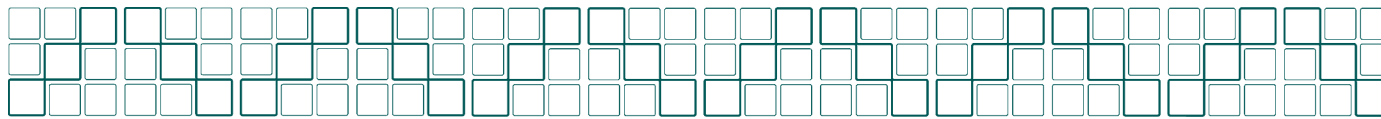
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- Two keys to success:
 - Being sure you understand expectations
 - Prioritizing your needs and focusing on your critical goals



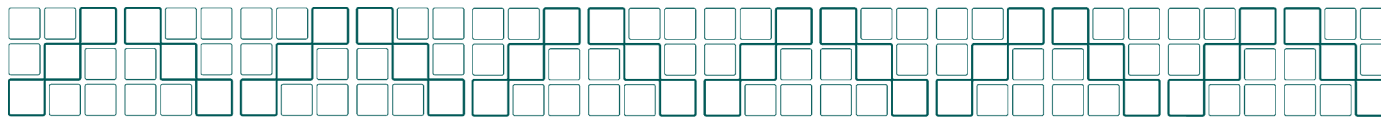
Steps to Success

- Make research your first priority
- Discuss expectations with your PI and daily supervisors
- Develop good mentoring relationships; involve your mentors in planning your time at NIH
- Carefully plan your application and interview process; start early and seek help
- Hone your communication and interpersonal skills
- Take care of your whole self



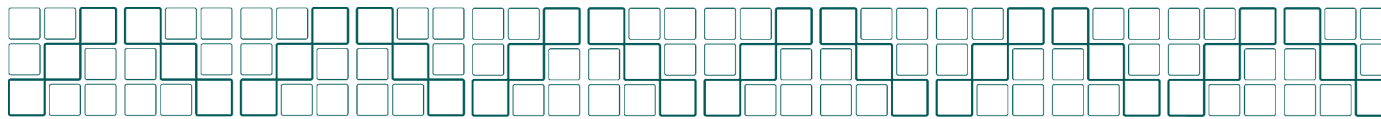
Resources Available

- IC Training Office/Training Director
- OITE staff
- FAES Graduate School
- Scientific Interest Groups (SIGs) [and Annual Reports]
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Office of the Ombudsman, Center for Cooperative Resolution
- The post-bac IRTA committee and Club-PCR for social activities



Mentoring Relationships Are Key To Your Success

- Successful scientists have many mentors -- in all areas
- Mentoring is a two-way relationship
- There is help to resolve issues:
 - Branch Chiefs and others in your research group
 - OITE staff and career counselors
 - Your IC Training Director
 - Office of the Ombudsman, Center for Cooperative Resolution
 - NIH Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

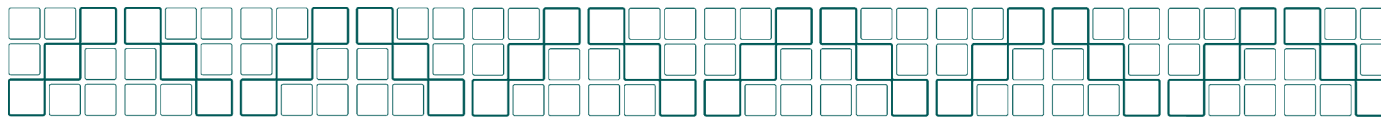


To Achieve Your Research Goals

- Meet with your lab supervisors
 - EARLY & OFTEN
 - Set expectations at the start
- Read papers, attend seminars and participate in journal clubs
- Focus on the “big picture” AND the details of your work
- Use “down-time” in lab wisely
- Actively participate in lab meetings
- Present your work at the Postbac Research Festival [and at your Institute retreat]
- Take a course at FAES

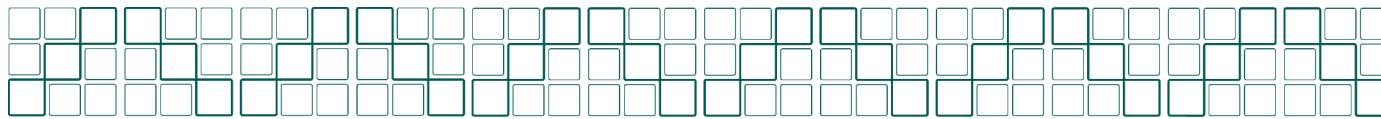
To Achieve Your Career Goals

- Attend appropriate career workshops
- Get involved in the NIH community – in and beyond your IC
- Volunteer, shadow, and do informational interviews
- Visit the OITE Career Services Center and check out our library of resources



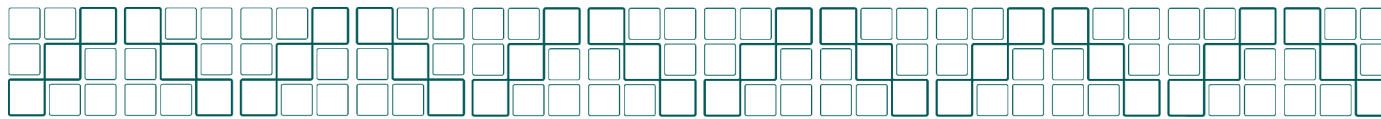
The Office of Intramural Training & Education

- Located on the 2nd floor of Building 2
 - Career library and counseling appointments
 - Loan deferments
- Additional resources are on our webpage - www.training.nih.gov
 - List of up-coming events, and registration links
 - You must be registered as an NIH trainee to access some OITE services
 - Videocasts of many prior workshops
 - PDFs of the moving guide and trainee handbooks
 - Links to other NIH resources



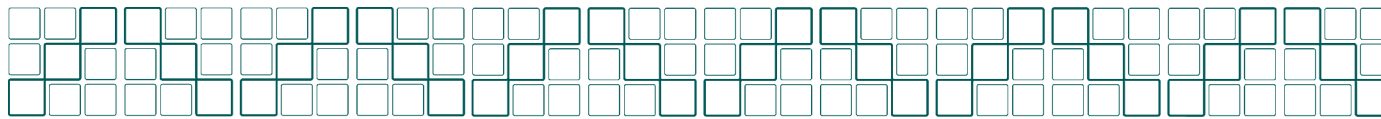
What Do We Offer?

- Workshops and Series
 - Written Communication Skills
 - Oral Communication Skills
 - Going to Graduate School series
 - Going to Professional School series
 - Career Brown bags
 - Interpersonal skills development
- Annual Events
 - Graduate & Professional School Fair
 - Postbac Poster Day



What Does the OITE Career Services Center Offer?

- Help with the graduate school application process - from start to finish
- Assistance in investigating different career options
- Review of CVs, resumes, and cover letters
- Advice and practice for informational interviewing
- Networking skill development
- Mock interviews
- Advice on developing interpersonal skills
- Email oite-careers@od.nih.gov to make an appointment



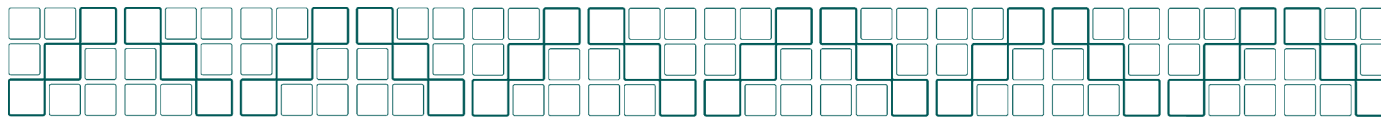
Taking Care of Your Whole Self

- NIH Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Recreation & Welfare Association (R&W)
- Fitness Centers – Bethesda, Rockledge, and in your community
- OITE Career Services Center
- Social Activities – ClubPCR
- Washington, DC and beyond

How We Learn and Respond to New Environments

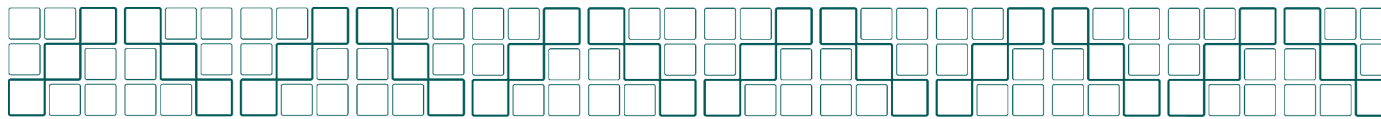
	Enthusiastic beginner	Disillusioned learner	Cautious performer	High Achiever
Competence	low	some	moderate	high
Confidence	High	Low	variable	High
Needs	Direction	Support	Support	Independence

Adapted from Ken Blanchard, Self Leadership and the One Minute Manager



The Bottom Line

- This can be an exciting, fun, and life/career-changing experience!
 - If you make the right choices.....and use the right resources



OITE Staff Members

- Sharon L. Milgram, PhD – Director
- Pat Sokolove, PhD – Deputy Director
- Debbie Cohen – Postbac Programs
- Career Services Office
 - Anne Kirschgessner – Career Counselor
 - Elaine Diggs – Career Counselor
 - Bill Higgins, PhD – Premed Advisor